

House Bill 1147

By: Representatives Rhodes of the 120th, Corbett of the 174th, LaHood of the 175th, Ridley of the 6th, and Smith of the 18th

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Chapter 3 of Title 27 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to
2 wildlife generally, so as to authorize the hunting and trapping of raccoons and opossum year
3 round; to provide for related matters; to provide an effective date; to repeal conflicting laws;
4 and for other purposes.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

6 style="text-align:center">**SECTION 1.**

7 Chapter 3 of Title 27 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to wildlife
8 generally, is amended by revising Code Section 27-3-15, relating to seasons and bag limits,
9 as follows:

10 "27-3-15.

11 (a) It shall be unlawful to hunt the following game species at any time during the periods
12 set forth below:

	<u>Game Species</u>	<u>Closed Season</u>
13	(1) Quail	March 16 — Oct. 31
14	(2) Grouse	March 1 — Oct. 14
15	(3) Turkey	
16		

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17	(A) Gobblers	May 22 — March 14
18	(B) Hens	All year
19	(4) Deer	Jan. 16 — Sept. 7; except that as
20		may be appropriate, and based solely
21		on sound wildlife management
22		principles, the department may by
23		rule extend the season by region, by
24		county, or locale to Jan. 31 for
25		archery only.
26	(5) Bobcat	March 1 — Oct. 14
27	(6) Opossum	March 1 — Oct. 14 <u>No closed</u>
28		<u>season, except as may be adopted by</u>
29		<u>the board</u>
30	(7) Rabbit	March 1 — Oct. 31
31	(8) Raccoon	March 1 — Oct. 14 <u>No closed</u>
32		<u>season, except as may be adopted by</u>
33		<u>the board</u>
34	(9) Squirrel	March 1 — August 14
35	(10) Bear	Jan. 16 — Sept. 7
36	(11) Sea turtles and their eggs	All year
37	(12) Cougar (Puma concolor)	All year
38	(13) Alligators	Nov. 1 — March 31
39	(14) Migratory game birds	March 11 — August 31
40	(b) It shall be unlawful to hunt the following game species at any time during the period	
41	set forth below, except that it shall not be unlawful to hunt the following game species	
42	during such periods or portions thereof, and in such number not to exceed the following	

43 numbers, as may be designated by the board as open seasons and bag limits for such
44 species:

45	<u>Game Species</u>	<u>Maximum Open Season</u>	<u>Maximum Bag Limits</u>	
			<u>Daily</u>	<u>Season</u>
46				
47	(1) Quail	Nov. 1 — March 15	12	No limit
48	(2) Grouse	Oct. 15 — Feb. 29	3	No limit
49	(3) Turkey	March 15 — May 21	3	3
50	gobblers			
51	(4) Deer	Sept. 8 — Jan. 15; except that as may be	12	12
52		appropriate and based solely on sound	The department may by	
53		wildlife management principles, the	rule exempt deer taken	
54		department may by rule extend the	on department managed	
55		season by region, by county, or locale to	lands from the	
56		Jan. 31 for archery only	state-wide bag limit.	
57	(5) Bobcat	Oct. 15 — Feb. 29	No limit	No limit
58	(6) Opossum	Oct. 15 — Feb. 29 <u>Jan. 1 — Dec. 31</u>	No limit	No limit
59	(7) Rabbit	Nov. 1 — Feb. 29	12	No limit
60	(8) Raccoon	Oct. 15 — Feb. 29 <u>Jan. 1 — Dec. 31</u>	No limit	No limit
61	(9) Squirrel	Aug. 15 — Feb. 29	12	No limit
62	(10) Fox	Jan. 1 — Dec. 31	No limit	No limit
63	(11) Migratory	Sept. 1 — March 10	Subject to limits set by	
64	game		the federal government	
65	birds		and adopted by the	
66			board	

67 (12) Bear Sept. 8 — Jan. 15 2 2

68 The department may by
69 rule exempt bear taken
70 on department managed
71 lands from the
72 state-wide bag limit.

73 (13) Alligators April 1 — Oct. 31 Subject to limits
74 adopted by the board

75 (c) In accordance with subsection (b) of this Code section and as may be appropriate,
76 based on sound wildlife management principles, the board is authorized to promulgate rules
77 and regulations establishing open seasons on a state-wide, regional, or local basis and
78 establishing daily and season bag limits.

79 (d) In accordance with subsection (b) of this Code section and in accordance with the
80 framework of open hunting season dates for migratory game birds established by the
81 United States Fish and Wildlife Service and as may be appropriate based on sound wildlife
82 management principles, the board is authorized to promulgate rules and regulations
83 establishing methods of taking, daily and season bag limits, and open seasons for migratory
84 game birds on a state-wide, regional, or local basis. The board is specifically authorized
85 to promulgate such rules and regulations without complying with Chapter 13 of Title 50,
86 the 'Georgia Administrative Procedure Act'; and all rules and regulations promulgated by
87 the board pursuant to this subsection shall be effective immediately upon adoption by the
88 board.

89 (e) It shall be unlawful for any person to possess more than the daily bag limit or more
90 than the aggregate of the daily bag limits while in the field or while returning from the field
91 to one's automobile or principal means of land transportation or to one's permanent abode
92 or temporary or transient place of lodging or to a commercial storage facility or to a post
93 office or to a common carrier facility.

94 (f) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsections (a) and (b) of this Code section, it shall
 95 be unlawful to take the species designated below, except squirrels, by means of falconry
 96 at any time during the period March 16 through September 30; but it shall not be unlawful
 97 to take the species designated below, except squirrels, by means of falconry during the
 98 period October 1 through March 15. It shall be unlawful to take squirrels by means of
 99 falconry at any time during the period March 16 through August 14, but it shall not be
 100 unlawful to take squirrels by means of falconry at any time during the period August 15
 101 through March 15 in such number not exceeding the bag limits for each such species as
 102 follows:

<u>Game Species</u>	<u>Maximum Bag Limits</u>	
	<u>Daily</u>	<u>Season</u>
105 (1) Quail	12	No limit
106 (2) Grouse	3	No limit
107 (3) Rabbit	12	No limit
108 (4) Squirrel	12	No limit

109 (g) As may be appropriate based on sound principles of wildlife management, the
 110 department is authorized to establish a deer management assistance program, which may
 111 include fees and may prescribe property-specific bag limits without complying with the
 112 state-wide bag limit specified in subsection (b) of this Code section."

113 **SECTION 2.**

114 Said chapter is further amended by revising Code Section 27-3-62, relating to open seasons,
 115 as follows:

116 "27-3-62.

117 (a) Except as otherwise specifically provided in this Code section, it shall be unlawful to
 118 trap any wildlife in this state between March 1 and November 19.

119 (b) It shall be unlawful to trap any wildlife during the period between November 20 and
120 February 29, except as otherwise provided in this Code section and except that it shall not
121 be unlawful to trap a fur-bearing animal during that period or a portion thereof if that
122 period or portion thereof is designated by the board as an open trapping season for such
123 fur-bearing animal.

124 (c) In accordance with subsection (b) of this Code section and as may be appropriate in
125 accordance with sound wildlife management principles, the board is authorized to
126 promulgate rules and regulations establishing open seasons for the trapping of fur-bearing
127 animals on a state-wide, regional, or local basis.

128 (d) Notwithstanding subsection (a) or (b) of this Code section, it shall be lawful to trap
129 beaver, raccoons, opossum, rats, and mice at any time during the year. It shall also be
130 lawful for any person to set steel traps within 200 yards of the residence or dwelling of any
131 such person for the protection of livestock, ratites, poultry, or other fowl or domestic
132 animals from any predatory bird or animal.

133 (e) Any person who violates any provision of this Code section shall be guilty of a
134 misdemeanor."

135 **SECTION 3.**

136 This Act shall become effective upon its approval by the Governor or upon its becoming law
137 without such approval.

138 **SECTION 4.**

139 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.